

THE SEVENTEENTH

Annual Report

ON THE

HEALTH AND SANITARY

≡≡≡ CONDITION ≡≡≡

OF THE

URBAN DISTRICT OF DESBOROUGH

FOR

1908,

BY


HENRY GIBBONS, M.D., C.M.,

Medical Officer of Health ; Fellow of the Incorporated Society of
Medical Officers of Health, &c.

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DESBOROUGH,

February 22nd, 1909.

THE DESBOROUGH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting to you my Seventeenth Annual Report for the year ended December 30th, 1908.

The population to the middle of 1908 I have estimated as 4,120.

The several Tables I. to V. are filled in as required by the Local Government Board and together with that relating to Factories, Workshops, &c., are hereto appended. The information afforded by these Tables will be found of special value and interest as they are referred to when the different matters in the body of the Report are under consideration.

Births and Birth-rate.

Last year I had occasion to bring to your notice the lamentable fact that the birth-rate 22·2 per 1,000 then presented was the lowest recorded for the previous ten years. It therefore gives me much satisfaction to now place before you a birth-rate of 29·6 per 1,000 living for the year 1908, the highest since the year 1901, there having been registered 118 legitimate and 4 illegitimate births, or a total of 122, 64 males and 58 females. It is to be hoped that another year may find this rise in the birth-rate maintained if not increased.

General Mortality.

There were registered 61 deaths, namely 29 males and 32 females, furnishing a death-rate of 14·8 per 1,000 living, which I regret to note is not only above that of the previous year but also higher than the average recorded for the decennium 1898-1907.

On referring to Tables IV. and V. it will be observed that Whooping Cough, Epidemic Influenza, Phthisis, other Tuberculous diseases, Cancer, Pneumonia, Heart diseases, and Wasting diseases in Infants were prominent causes of mortality, and, besides these, Accidents were responsible for three of the total number of deaths. There were eight deaths between the ages of 70 and 80, two between 80 and 90, and three of the age of 90 and upwards.

The average death-rate for the years 1898-1907 was 12·8 per 1,000.

Infantile Mortality.

Twelve deaths were registered below the age of one year, being equivalent to an Infant rate of mortality of 98·3 per 1,000 births. Three of the infants were below the age of one month, 4 between one and two months, 2 between three and four months, 2 between nine and ten months and 1 between ten and eleven months.

The baby mortality although somewhat less than that recorded for the previous year is to my mind unduly high, in fact is capable of great reduction. This expression of opinion will I venture to think not be regarded as unwarrantably pessimistic in character when the fact is considered that with reference to 7 of the total number of 12 deaths, one was due to Whooping Cough and 6 to

Wasting diseases, and in the latter class the infants were all more or less hand-fed, a process which entails time, trouble, care, cleanliness and intelligence, and exposes the life of the infant to greater risks than when nature herself is the purveyor.

The cards with excellent printed instructions to mothers on the care and management of Infants, prepared by the County Medical Officer of Health, have as a rule been distributed by me to those in need of them, and I believe the same practice has been adopted by the registered local midwife, but unfortunately in too many instances the advice thus tendered has been utterly ignored and that of some neighbour acted upon with disastrous results to the babies concerned. It is to be hoped that the advent of the Health Visitor, whose work the County Council has recently been good enough to extend to this district, will mark the dawn of a brighter era for the infants, and that before long the causes which contribute to the deplorable "massacre of the innocents" will have passed away.

In this connection I may be permitted to refer to the Notification of Births Act, which was brought during the year to the notice of the Council for adoption, but was then referred to the Sanitary Committee, and resulted in no further steps being taken in the matter. It may become necessary to again invite your attention to this Act.

Phthisis.

The number of deaths from Phthisis or Pulmonary Tuberculosis was 4, giving a death-rate of '97 per 1,000 living. It is satisfactory to find that the mortality from this dire disease presents a decline, though slight when

compared with the figures 5 and 1·23 respectively of the previous year; but unfortunately the present manifestations of this malady among members of the local community do not furnish strong-grounds for predicting any very marked improvement in the immediate future. At any rate there is no doubt that the public as a whole are becoming alive to the fact that by avoiding consumption's allies, namely, intemperance and other excesses, closed windows, over-work, crowded sleeping, living and working rooms, smoke and dust, they are at the same time safeguarding against the disease. And as this knowledge spreads—for the mere knowledge of the evil is in itself a first and necessary step towards its cure—and preventible means are persistently practised, and the careful consumptive makes himself no longer dangerous to live with, the efforts of the Sanitary Authority in coping with this infectious disease must eventually meet with that crowning result all lovers of suffering humanity have so long hoped for.

As affording an example of the infectious character of the disease in question and of its germs being capable of primarily attacking organs other than the lungs, I may here mention the very sad case which came under my observation during the year, of three members of one family dying within a comparatively short period of time of one another, the mother, the victim of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, was followed by her two children being attacked with Tubercular Peritonitis and Tuberculous Cerebral Meningitis, respectively.

It has been the practice in this district for some years past to have the sick rooms of those dying from Consumption disinfected free of charge, but unfortunately owing to the absence of a Steam Disinfector the clothing

has not always been efficiently dealt with at the time. Reference might here appropriately be made to the Public Health (Tuberculosis) Regulations 1908, of the Local Government Board, which provide that Poor Law cases shall be notified to the Medical Officer of Health of the district. If the information thereby obtained is to prove of that benefit to the public health aimed at by these Regulations it is very necessary that there should be at the command of your officials a Steam Disinfector, which I would urge upon you to obtain at the earliest opportunity.

Respiratory Diseases.

Pleurisy and Bronchitis were responsible for six deaths, equivalent to a Respiratory death-rate of 1·45 per 1000, This is less than that of last year when the deaths were seven and the death-rate 1·72.

Zymotic Mortality.

From Zymotic diseases there were 5 deaths, viz.: one from Scarlet Fever and 4, including one below the age of one year, from whooping cough, giving a rate of mortality of 1·21 per 1,000 against 1·72 for the previous year.

Scarlet Fever.

Six cases of Scarlet Fever were notified during the year and one of these proved fatal. These cases, which infected five houses, were notified as follows:—One in April three in May and two in July. In each case printed instructions for preventing the spread of the disease were furnished to those in charge of the sick, disinfectants supplied, and both your Inspector and myself made special inspections of the premises concerned and

inquired into the circumstances attendant upon the occurrence of the cases, but in no instance could the source of origin be traced although there was some suspicion of school influences having been at work. The fatal case in a child 4 years of age was at the outset of a very virulent type and death took place at a very early stage of the disease. It occurred in a dwelling where only the merest apology for isolation could be attempted owing to the scarcity of accommodation and free communication between the two bedrooms at disposal, but notwithstanding these facts and the presence of plenty of susceptible material in the house there was no extension of the disease from this source.

Enteric Fever.

Cases of Enteric Fever, this disease having been prevalent in the district at the end of 1907, continued to crop up during the months of January, February, March and October, with the result that a total of nine cases were notified against 43 for the previous year. Happily there was no mortality from this disease.

Whooping Cough.

Whooping Cough was very prevalent during the months of February, March, and April, and was responsible for four deaths all below the age of five years.

With the view of checking the extension of the disease the teachers at infant schools were advised to be on the outlook for any suspicious cases amongst the scholars and to exclude from school any of such character; besides, the parents or guardians of the infected children were requested to take such measures which would prevent the infection spreading to children of other people.

Although the advice thus tendered was loyally carried out by the great majority of those concerned it is regrettable to have to state that a few parents regarded the malady so lightly and were apparently so neglectful of their duties to the community that they permitted their children to come into contact with others not infected and thus scattered the germs broadcast in the public streets.

When it is considered that Whooping Cough is a highly infectious disease having a tendency to recur in epidemic form every few years and bringing death in its train, besides leaving those it has attacked in many cases a prey to Tuberculosis and other diseases, it is, to say the least, time it was placed amongst the compulsory notifiable infectious diseases.

Diarrhœa.

Cases of Diarrhœa occurred during the Autumn, few in number, and of a mild type. No death was registered as due to this disease.

Influenza.

Influenza came under observation throughout the whole of the year, and although on no occasion did the disease assume any great epidemic form, it was primarily accountable for three deaths.

Schools.

The public elementary schools of the district have been visited from time to time and the sanitary conditions bound to be satisfactory. At these schools the water used for drinking purposes is that derived from the town supply.

Isolation Hospital and Disinfection.

The only Isolation Hospital in the district is that for Small-pox, happily it has not been found necessary to utilise it during the year.

At the termination of every case of Enteric Fever, Scarlet Fever and other infectious diseases, the sick-rooms have been disinfected under the supervision of your Inspector, but as already referred to the clothes and bedding, owing to the absence of a suitable Steam Disinfector, having not received that treatment your officers would desire.

Water Supply.

Although it has not been necessary to interfere with the supply of water to the inhabitants at any time during the year, the well at the Water-works furnishes some ground for anxiety in view of the fact that its depth at the end of 1907 was 16 feet whereas at the corresponding period of 1908 it was eight feet, seven inches.

Of course this reduction of the water supply is in a great measure accounted for by the reduced rainfall, there having been 6.57 inches less than in the previous year.

There should be no blinking at the fact that the steps will have to be taken in the near future to ensure a reliable supply of that which is of primary sanitary importance, and which no public body can afford to disguise.

The total quantity of water supplied to the town has been on an average of 29,000 gallons per day, and equivalent to 7 gallons per head, of the estimated population of 4,120.

This consumption appears to be small but it must be remembered that the town water supply is supplemented in a great majority of dwelling houses by a rain-water cistern, and this water is largely used for washing clothes etc. The main in Pioneer Avenue has been extended so as to permit of some houses in that locality being supplied with the town water.

With reference to the surroundings of the water-works well certain recommendations were made in my Report of last year, the majority and most pressing of these, I am pleased to state, have been carried out by the Council. The land in the immediate vicinity of the well has been turfed over and presents not only a sanitary but also an aesthetic improvement.

The drain from the urinal which was found to be leaking has been taken up and a temporary arrangement of pans and troughs provided.

The Sewer in the Braybrook road and near to the Water-works having been found defective was taken up and replaced by an entirely new one with a suitable inspection chamber. In view of the dangerous proximity of this sewer to the Water-works well, it has been kept under the vigilant eye of your Surveyor and frequently tested by him with satisfactory results.

Samples of water from the Water-works well have on four different occasions during the past year (the last in October) been sent to the Clinical Research Association for Bacteriological Examination, and found to be entirely satisfactory.

Dwelling Houses and Over-crowding.

There have been 18 dwelling houses erected during the year for the most part located on the new estate belonging to the Co-operative Society.

These houses mainly designed for the working classes, afford excellent accommodation, are conveniently arranged and have abundance of open-air space about them ; but not withstanding all this additional house accommodation in the district it is regrettable to have to record that four cases of over-crowding required the intervention of your Inspector.

Excrement and Refuse Disposal.

The attention of your Surveyor has been frequently called to the dirty condition of the W.C's in some localities. The neglect of the users to utilise the flushing apparatus has resulted in the blocking of the drains on several occasions.

House refuse is collected twice a week by the public scavengers and deposited in a field in the neighbourhood, where it is partly burnt and afterwards used as manure. This work of public scavenging appears to be carried out satisfactorily. It would however be more conducive to sanitation were occupiers required to furnish suitable galvanized-iron receptacles in place of the wooden boxes in present use.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.

The sewers of the district have been periodically examined by the Surveyor, who reports that they appear to be in good condition. Reference in my last Annual Report was made to the unsatisfactory state of the Union street sewer and the hope was then expressed that the provision of an automatic flusher would improve matters. I am pleased to be able to add that the anticipation has been realised from the fact that the sewer has not required scraping since.

The flushing of the sewers has been well carried out, 1,820 loads of water having been used for this purpose ; besides, attention has been given to most of the house-drains. The work of flushing the latter having been limited by the fact of the hose at the disposal of the Council not being of sufficient length.

The provision of a flap for the outfall sewer appears so far to have abated the annoyance due to foul effluvia from the manholes in Rothwell road, and referred to in my last year's report. In the event of any further complaints being made with regard to these man-holes it will be advisable to have ventilating shafts erected in connection with the sewer concerned.

The Sewage disposal works have been considerably improved by the addition of an acre of land, suitably drained ; further, it has been decided to level this plot and drain another. The completion of all these works should tend to the maintenance of that high standard of purity which both effluent and brook at present possess.

Inspections.

The whole of the district has been systematically inspected by me during the year.

Slaughter-houses.

The slaughter-houses and premises pertaining thereto have been frequently inspected and the following nuisances have been reported and duly abated :—

Lime-washing—five.

Accumulation of Manure—one.

Offective paving to yard—one.

Saugage house in need of cleaning—one.

Lime-washing—one.

Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.

As the outcome of visits paid to the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops, one dairy, kept in excellent condition, was found in such proximity to a pail-closet as would permit of flies from the latter gaining easy access to the former. This objectionable state of affairs having been brought to the notice of the owners the necessary structural alterations were in due course effected. In additon it was reported that one dairy and one cowshed were in need of lime-washing, and a second cowshed required suitable paving. The usual notices having been served upon those responsible, all these nuisances were speedily abated.

Factories and Workshops, (Bakehouses, &c.)

In company with your Sanitary Inspector, I have systematically visited and inspected the factories and workshops of the district, and, taken generally, the requirements of the Factories and Workshops Act, 1901, have been found satisfactorily carried out. Eighteen inspections of factories and twenty-eight of workshops were made, and 23 defects having relation to sanitary accommodation, want of cleanliness, ventilation, and other nuisances were found.

There were in addition 156 inspections of Outworkers' premises. The lists received from employers numbered 16, and the outworkers specified thereon, 410. The Registered Workshops total 24. There are no underground Bakehouses in the district.

There was one instance of outwork in infected premises and an order (S. 110). Closely associated with one bakehouse, which was in need of lime-washing, there was found the keeping of pigeons and rabbits, under conditions unlikely to promote sanitation.

On written notices having been served upon the occupiers of the several factories and workshops, all the defects referred to above were speedily remedied. In no instance was it necessary to prosecute.

Outworkers' employment in this district consists of boot and shoe work and corset making.

A prominent feature observed during these and former inspections of the factories and workshops was their ill-ventilation. Ventilators were provided in the factories according to regulations, but were frequently found closed, owing to the action of the workers themselves. Many of the workshops were deficient in ventilators, and here too, advantage was not taken of such simple measures as the opening of doors and windows. If the workers would but give serious consideration to the evil effects of breathing impure air, they would speedily realise the danger to health caused by their short-sighted policy. The general stuffiness leads to lowered vitality, susceptibility to the attacks of disease germs, and general unfitness for the duties of the day. Workers should

also remember that, as members of a body, they have duties and responsibilities to their fellow workers, and in many cases those desirous of enjoying the benefits of such ventilation are prevented from doing so by the selfishness of individuals. If this appeal to the general sense of what is the duty of each in this matter, be not responded to, steps should be taken by the occupiers of such factories to see that responsible persons are appointed to carry out this most important duty.

Inspector's Report.

The Sanitary Inspector reports that 288 nuisances were dealt with during the past year. In 10 cases it was necessary to serve statutory notices in order to secure abatement, and 17 nuisances are still in hand. The above chiefly related to defective drains and ventilation of same, lime-washing, over-crowding, pig-styes, and insufficient W.C. accommodation.

I may here be permitted to express my high appreciation of the assistance your Inspector has afforded me in the discharge of duties pertaining to the public health.

Streets.

Three streets—Pioneer, Federation, and Unity Avenues—have been taken over by the Council during the year.

I would point out that several houses in the parish are without numbers—a state of affairs not only inconvenient to the occupiers in question, but also confusing to your officials.

It is satisfactory to note that the experiment of tar-painting Station road and High street proved effectual in allaying the dust complained of in these localities.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY GIBBONS,

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE I.—URBAN DISTRICT OF DESBOROUGH.

Year.	Population estimated to Middle of each year.	BIRTHS		Total Deaths Registered in the District.				Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institutions beyond the District.	Nett Deaths at all Ages belonging to the District.	
				Under 1 Year of Age.		At all Ages.				Number	Rate
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate per 1000 Births Registered.	Number	Rate				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1898	3364	106	31.5	15	141	49	14.5			49	14.5
1899	3439	104	30.2	27	259	57	16.5			57	16.5
1900	3514	110	31.3	12	109	46	13.0			46	13.0
1901	3592	114	31.7	10	87	48	13.3			48	13.3
1902	3671	101	27.2	5	49	34	9.2			34	9.2
1903	3752	88	23.4	10	113	56	14.9			56	14.9
1904	3835	106	27.64	13	122	48	12.5			48	12.5
1905	3920	113	28.82	13	115	51	13.01			51	13.01
1906	4000	99	24.75	9	90	38	9.5			38	9.5
1907	4050	90	22.2	9	100	48	11.8			48	11.8
Averages for years 1898-1907.	3713	103	27.8	12	118	47	12.8			47	12.8
1908	4120	122	29.6	12	98.3	61	14.8			61	14.8

Area of District in acres
(exclusive of area covered by water.

2400

Total population at all ages...
Number of Inhabited houses
Average number of persons per house

3573
748
4.7

At Census of 1901.

TABLE III.—URBAN DISTRICT OF DESBOROUGH.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.						
	At all Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 to 5 years.	5 to 15 years.	15 to 25 yrs.	25 to 65 yrs.	65 and upw'ds
Scarlet Fever ...	6		3	3			
Enteric Fever ...	9			4	4	1	
Totals ...	15		3	7	4	1	

Isolation Hospital: Only for Small-pox.

*Number of diseases that can
be concurrently treated* } One, Small-pox.

TABLE IV.—URBAN DISTRICT OF DESBOROUGH.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	DEATHS IN OR BELONGING TO WHOLE DISTRICT AT SUBJOINED AGES.						
	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and up-wards
Scarlet Fever ...	1		1				
Whooping Cough ...	4	1	3				
Croup ...	1		1				
Epidemic Influenza	3					2	1
Phthisis, (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) ...	4				2	2	
Other tuberculous diseases ...	5		2	2	1		
Cancer, malignant disease ...	4					3	1
Pneumonia ...	5		3			1	1
Pleurisy ...	1		1				
Premature Birth ...	2	2					
Heart diseases ...	5					1	4
Accidents ...	3		1				2
All other causes ...	23	9	3		1	5	5
All causes ...	61	12	15	2	4	14	14

TABLE V.—Infantile Mortality during the Year 1908.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 Week.	2—3 Weeks.	3—4 Weeks.	Total under 1 month.	1—2 Months.	3—4 Months.	9—10 Months.	10—11 Months.	Total Deaths under One Year.
ALL CAUSES { Certified	1	1	1	3	4	1	2	1	11
{ Uncertified						1			1
Whooping Cough ...								1	1
Premature Birth ...	1	1		2					2
Atrophy, Debility, Marasmus ...			1	1	3	2			6
Convulsions ...					1		2		3

Sub-division of Rothwell.

Population (estimated to middle of 1908) 4120.

Births in the year, legitimate, 118 ; illegitimate, 4.

Deaths in the year, of legitimate infants, 12 ; illegitimate infants, nil.

Deaths from ALL CAUSES AT ALL AGES, 61.

RAINFALL TABLE.

1908.	Total Fall Inches	Days on which .01 or more fell.	Average Rate of fall on Wet Days.	Greatest Fall in 24 hours	Date of Greatest Fall.
January ...	1.18	10	.118	.57	7th
February ...	1.10	14	.078	.27	16th
March ...	2.94	20	.147	.74	25th
April ...	2.90	19	.152	.48	25th
May ...	1.49	12	.124	.29	3rd
June ...	1.17	7	.167	.47	1st
July ...	2.25	13	.173	.51	9th
August ...	2.89	17	.227	.83	31st
September ...	1.50	17	.088	.36	3rd
October ...	1.42	12	.118	.42	16th
November95	12	.079	.21	22nd
December ...	1.39	18	.077	.20	9th
Totals	21.18	172			

Taken at Desborough Water-works, situate at 453 feet above ordnance.

Administration of Factory and Workshop Act, 1901.

1.—INSPECTION.

Premises.	Inspections.	Written Notices	Prosecutions.
Factories	18	8	Nil
Workshops	28	11	Nil
	46	19	

2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

Particulars.	Found.	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	Number of Prosecutions.
Want of cleanliness	11	11	Nil	Nil
Want of ventilation	5	5	„	„
Other nuisances	5	5	„	„
* Sanitary accommodation defective	2	2	„	„
	23	19		

* Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, has been adopted—One W.C. to 25 persons

4.—REGISTERED WORKSHOPS.

Workshops on the Register (s. 131) at the end of the year.	Number.
Bakehouses	6
Slaughterhouses	3
Other workshops	15
Total number of workshops on Register	24

5.—OTHER MATTERS.

Class.	Number.
Action taken in matters referred by H.M. Inspector as remediable under the Public Health Acts, but not under the Factory and Workshop Act (s 5)	Notified by H.M. Inspector Reports (of action taken) sent to H.M. Inspector.
	Nil
	Nil

No underground Bakehouses.

FORM 572.—Administration of

3.—E

NATURE OF WORK.	OUTWORKERS' LISTS, SECTION					
	Lists received from Employers				Numbers of Addresses of Outworkers received from other Councils	Numbers of Addresses of Outworkers forwarded to other Councils
	Twice in the year		Once in the year			
	Lists	Out-workers	Lists	Out-workers		
Wearing Apparel— (1) making, &c	16	410			3	

Factory and Workshop Act, 1901.

WORK

			Number of Inspections of Outworkers' premises	Outwork in unwholesome premises, Section 108			Outwork in Infected Premises Sections 109, 110		
Prosecutions				Instances	Notices served	Prosecu- tions	Instances	Orders made (S. 110)	Prosecu- tions. S.109, 110
	Failing to keep or per- mit inspec- tion of lists	Failing to send lists							
			156	12	14		1	1	Nil

